

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 TRSE-00 /086 W
-----060428Z 074388 /62

R 052217Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5483
INFO AMCONSUL BELIZE
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USUN NY
USCINCSO
AMEMBASSY PANAMA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, GT, BH, US
SUBJ: BRIEFING OF HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON BELIZE

REF: STATE 72086

1. EMBOFF BRIEFED EDUARDO RODRIGUEZ, DIRECTOR, BELIZE AFFAIRS
IN GUATEMALAN FONOFF, ALONG LINES SUGGESTED REFTEL. RODRIGUEZ
TOOK IT WELL AND SAID THAT GOG OF COURSE UNDERSTOOD THAT USG
IS AWARE OF STATUS OF GUATEMALAN-UK NEGOTIATIONS OVER
BELIZE AND POSITIONS TAKEN BY BOTH SIDES IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.
HE REGRETTED THAT THE DIA BRIEFER'S TESTIMONY HAD BEEN
PUBLISHED, BUT UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS WAS INADVERTENT AND THAT
BRIEFER WAS NOT MAKING A POLICY STATEMENT ON THE PART OF
USG. RODRIGUEZ SPECULATED THAT BELIZE OR PANAMA HAD HAD SOME
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HAND IN BRINGING SUBCOMMITTEE PUBLICATION TO THE ATTENTION OF
THE PRESS. HE NOTED THAT EFE STORY HAD COME FROM
PANAMA AND THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN GUATEMALA AND PANAMA
ARE STRAINED BECAUSE OF PANAMA'S SUPPORT FOR BELIZE.

2. ONLY THREE FURTHER ITEMS HAVE APPEARED IN GUATEMALAN
PRESS ON THIS SUBJECT. TWO OF THE SMALLER PAPERS,

LA HORA ON APRIL 1 AND IMPACTO ON APRIL 2, CARRIED A DPA DESPATCH DATED WASHINGTON WHICH BEGINS AS FOLLOWS: "THE USG EMPLOYEE WHO SAID SOME MONTHS AGO THAT GOG HAS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO ACCEPT THE INDEPENDENCE OF BELIZE EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL OPINION AND NOT THAT OF THE GOVERNMENT, A SPOKESMAN OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT TOLD DPA TODAY. 'THAT WAS HIS INTERPRETATION AND HE DID NOT EXPRESS THE VIEWPOINT OF THE USG,'...THE STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS NOT INTERVENED IN THE TERRITORIAL DISPUTE NOR DOES IT HAVE INTENTIONS OF DOING SO. AT THE SAME TIME HE EXPRESSED ITS DESIRE THAT THE DISPUTE BE FAVORABLY RESOLVED BETWEEN GUATEMALA, GREAT BRITAIN AND BELIZE IN THE NEAR FUTURE, INDICATING THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL REMAIN NEUTRAL, AFTER HAVING ATTEMPTED TO MEDIATE THE CONFLICT TEN YEARS AGO."

3. ONLY EDITORIAL COMMENT SO FAR, IN EL GRAFICO APRIL 4, INDULGED IN THE SAME SPECULATION AS RODRIGUEZ CONCERNING POSSIBLE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT COMPLICITY IN SPREADING THE STORY ABOUT THE HOUSE TESTIMONY. AFTER NOTING THAT PANAMA HAD VOTED IN THE LAST UNGA FOR THE BELIZE RESOLUTION, THE EDITORIAL SAYS IT COULD BE SIGNIFICANT THAT AN ATTEMPT HAS NOW BEEN MADE FROM PANAMA TO SPREAD A FALSE VERSION OF THE GOG POSITION ON BELIZE. EDITORIAL CONCLUDES, QUOTE FORTUNATELY, THE STORY HAS BEEN REFUTED AND THE BI-LATERAL TALKS WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM WILL CONTINUE IN SEARCH OF A JUST SETTLEMENT. UNQUOTE.

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4. COMMENT: DEPARTMENT'S PROMPT ACTION IN RESPONDING TO REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION AND GUIDANCE AS WELL AS ITS BRIEFING OF GERMAN PRESS AGENCY REPORTER HAS HELPED PUT THE BEST FACE POSSIBLE ON THIS UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT. BOSTER

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